

Winnemem Wintu Tribe  
14840 Bear Mountain Road, Redding, CA 96003  
530-275-2737 530-275-4193

## Winnemem Wintu

### “Tuna Leliit Chonas” ~ Dance in the Old Way

#### What is the history of this dance?

This dance is an old ceremonial way of stepping up to and facing challenges to our people and that which we are placed here to protect. It was last danced for the salmon in 1876 to protest the Baird Fish Hatchery<sup>1</sup>, which prevented all salmon from swimming up the McCloud and denying the Winnemem Wintu their major food source.

#### Why is it being done now?

We are dancing now to show the McCloud River that we will fight the proposed raising of Shasta Dam and protect these waters from increased further destruction.

#### What destruction is the Tribe concerned with?

The raising of the dam will inundate ceremonial and burial sites along the upper McCloud River up to and beyond the Fender's ferry Road Bridge destroying what is left of our homeland.<sup>2</sup> Spiritually, it steals away our rights and threatens the education of the Winnemem children: there is nowhere else in the world they can learn these things. It will affect fish habitat and have other environmental impacts.

#### What is the tribe's intention regarding the outcome and purpose of this ceremony?

The word Winnemem means “Middle Water” and we are the McCloud River people. This dance is our way of paying respect to and offering prayers to Creator for protection for the river while at the same time raising the awareness of our non-Indian neighbors to the damage to our culture and life-ways. We want everyone to understand that this is a peaceful, non-violent event that at its core is religious and sacred. We will give voice to that which people cannot hear.

#### What are the overall goals of the tribe?

It is our obligation to preserve our culture and to protect our sacred sites. To be Winnemem means to care for the river, and for the welfare of our elders and children, as we carry on our traditions. We are a traditional people. We want members of Congress and the agencies of the U.S. Department of the Interior to see that justice must be availed to our people. This is a matter of environmental justice and civil rights<sup>3</sup>. When Shasta Dam was first constructed, the federal government evicted the Winnemem Wintu from their homes along the McCloud and made promises of compensation and new lands that still have not been kept. Now we are asked to give more of our lands and see our rights taken away. We ask that the government keep its promises, restore our status as an Indian nation, and work with us to find alternative ways to provide water storage.<sup>4</sup>

#### What else is the tribe doing to stop the Shasta Lake Water Resource Investigation and proposed Raise of Shasta Dam's level?

We have, using our own funds, made six trips to Washington DC and have established working relationships with our congressional delegations. We have begun work on building working relationships within the California State Department of Water Resources, the Bureau of Reclamation, and CalFed to ensure that our concerns are included in all scoping documents related to this project. We have several legal, environmental, and media experts who are donating their time to work with us on this issue. And

Winnemem Wintu Tribe  
14840 Bear Mountain Road, Redding, CA 96003  
530-275-2737 530-275-4193

we are also working with other tribes and environmental groups such as the Friends of the River, Cal Trout, as well as the CRMP (made up of stakeholders interested in the preservation of the McCloud River<sup>5</sup>), and CALFED's Environmental Justice Sub-committee to see if there are workable alternatives to raising the dam.<sup>6</sup> Our intent is to work cooperatively with our local, state, and tribal partners to promote sound ecosystem management while maintaining the integrity of our cultural resources.

---

<sup>1</sup> Concerning the reaction of the McCloud Wintu, Stone (1876a:408) wrote:

"Their success thus far in keeping white men off had given them a good deal of assurance, and they evidently entertained the belief that they should continue, like their ancestors before them, to keep the McCloud River from being desecrated by the presence of the white man.... They assembled in force, with their bows and arrows, on the opposite bank of the river, and spent the whole day in resentful demonstrations, or, as Mr. Woodbury expressed it, in trying to drive us off. Had they thought they could succeed in driving us off with impunity to themselves, they undoubtedly would have done so, and have hesitated at nothing to accomplish their object; but the terrible punishments which they have suffered from the hands of the whites for past misdeeds are too vivid in their memories to allow them to attempt any open or punishable violence. So, at night, they went off, and seemed subsequently to accept in general the situation."

<sup>2</sup> See attached Acrobat Document Photo plate #29

<sup>3</sup> Environmental Justice states in effect that no group of under-represented, minority, or low income populations should bear the brunt of responsibility for any project designed for the betterment of others. This dam raise will be the third time the Winnemem Wintu Tribe has borne such liability due to Shasta Dam and Shasta Lake.

<sup>4</sup> Please see accompanying fact sheet on alternative solutions to the water storage problem.

<sup>5</sup> CRMP was established to ensure the protection of the "free flowing nature" of the McCloud River as a result of the enactment of The California Wild & Scenic Rivers Act (Public Resources Code Sec. 5093.50 et seq.) was passed in 1972 to preserve designated rivers possessing extraordinary scenic, recreation, fishery, or wildlife values. With its initial passage, the California system protected segments of the Smith River and tributaries, Klamath River and tributaries, Scott River, Salmon River, Trinity River, Eel River, Van Duzen River, and American River. The state system was subsequently expanded by the Legislature to include the East Carson and West Walker rivers in 1989, and the South Yuba River in 1999. In addition, segments of the McCloud River, Deer Creek, and Mill Creek were protected under the Act in 1989 and 1995 respectively, although these segments were not formally designated as components of the system.

<sup>6</sup> Alternative suggestions made by the Winnemem Wintu Tribe include: better water management at the Shasta Dam; improved upstream monitoring, construct fish ladders for Salmon at Shasta Dam to allow Salmon to return to McCloud thus alleviating the loss of anadromous fish due to "water temperature." When there was no Dam, Salmon populations were very high and only slowed due to contamination from leaching mines along the tributaries of the river